



The AWA Tribunals

[We fade up on Mark Stegglet standing outside of a room marked "MAIN CONFERENCE ROOM" with a "DO NOT DISTURB" light turned on underneath it. It looks like a pretty nice office building from the little we can see of it, stylishly-decorated and quite formal. Stegglet is in a black suit and has a solemn expression on his face as he speaks.]

MS: Hello, AWA fans... and thank you for joining me on what will be a very memorable day in AWA history without doubt. They say the winners of a war write the history of it... and today, the winners of the war for control of the American Wrestling Alliance in 2017 will write the history of what happened... and determine the future of those involved. We're at the main AWA office building here in Dallas, Texas where...

[He points to the door behind him.]

MS: ...right behind this door, judgment will be served. A long list of AWA contracted individuals have been summoned here today to make their case to those given the authority to dispense justice on this December morning. We're told some have elected not to come at all. Others have come ready to fight for their very careers. Inside these doors, a panel of five awaits them. Let's take a look.

[We crossfade into the room where a large rectangular table has been set up on a platform on one end of the room. Seated behind the table are three of the original founders of the American Wrestling Alliance - Jon Stegglet, Todd Michaelson, and Bobby Taylor. They make up the center of the panel's seating arrangement. On one far end sitting next to Bobby Taylor is former AWA executive and legend of the ring, Karl O'Connor. On the other, sitting next to Todd Michaelson is his lovely wife, former broadcast partner, and co-owner of the AWA, Lori Dane. All have a very serious expression on their faces, not taking the day's duties lightly as we fade back outside the makeshift courtroom to Mark Stegglet.]

MS: The fate of many in the hands of five.

[Stegglet gestures to a sheet of paper on the wall, listing the names of those who have been summoned to Dallas to defend their actions.

Alana, Jay
Castillo, Javier
Colton, Blake
Dane, Morgan
The Dogs of War
Ebola Zaire
Fawcett, Harrison
Hardin, John Wesley
Hayes, Sandra
Hunter, Jackson
Jacobs, Violence
Kendrick, Kerry
King Kong Hogan
Kurayami
Law, John
Lynch, James
Matthews, Jeff
MAWAGA
Muteesa
O'Connor, Bobby
Polemos
Rage, Derek
Temple, Truth Marie
Torin The Titan
Vasquez, Juan
Westerly, Veronica

And we pan back to Stegglet.]

MS: The day begins with the first person coming for justice...

[We get a shot of Violence Jacobs appearing on a video monitor that has been set up in the makeshift "courtroom." As she finishes speaking, we listen in on the judges.]

JS: To me, your offenses were pretty minor. You were a hired gun at best with no real devotion to the cause.

[Some nods from the other judges.]

TM: I understand that you've actually already gone back to Japan to work there - is that right?

[Jacobs nods.]

TM: In light of that plus what Jon just said, I'm inclined to vote for no penalty for your actions and to extend an offer for you to return to the AWA on a full-time basis down the road. Oh, and give your brother our best.

[We fade away from Jacobs to the Suited Savage himself, MAWAGA. MAWAGA is in a black suit - jet black with the shirt and tie to match. His eyes are hidden behind dark sunglasses.]

BT: You've got quite the list of offenses here, MAWAGA... including locking me in that Tongan grip of yours back at Memorial Day Mayhem.

[MAWAGA does not respond.]

KOC: And yet, you don't seem to have any words to defend yourself.

[MAWAGA does not respond.]

JS: That said, I think I speak for everyone when I say that we truly appreciate what you did for Ricki at SuperClash and-

[The door swings open and the red with anger face of Kerry Kendrick comes stomping into view.]

KK: You think you people are going to leave me stuck out there all day?! Nuh uh! I'm here! Let's...

[Kendrick trails off as he spots MAWAGA.]

KK: ...oh... I... I didn't... him?

[Stegglet fixes a stern gaze on Kendrick.]

JS: We'll get to you, Mr. Kendrick, when we're damn good and-

[Todd Michaelson clears his throat, cutting off his former announce partner.]

JS: Todd?

[Michaelson smirks.]

TM: Maybe we can kill two birds with one stone, huh? I see two guys in front of us who had no problem working for Korugun... and in fact, Kendrick here kinda thrived on it for a bit. He's going to go down in history as a Rumble winner when we all know Supernova won that Rumble.

[Kendrick flushes with anger again.]

KK: How dare-

[Michaelson raises a hand.]

TM: Let's not get yourself in any deeper trouble, kid. And let's make this simple because the Shark's always had a soft spot for you so I'd hate to disappoint him. The two of you...

[He gestures at Kendrick and MAWAGA.]

TM: ...have some unfinished business from SuperClash, yeah? And since you're both on the chopping block here, let's have some fun with this. I say at Super Saturday in February, we have a match. Kerry Kendrick versus MAWAGA...

[Kendrick looks a little anxious at this idea.]

KK: Well, sure, I could kick his-

[Michaelson interrupts again.]

TM: ...and the loser leaves town for SIX MONTHS!

[You can almost hear the fans cheering around the world as Kendrick stands slack-jawed... and MAWAGA smiles.]

JS: That sounds like a plan to me. Dismissed!

[We fade away from a stunned Kendrick to...

...a quick montage of judgments...]

JS: King Kong Hogan is no longer under AWA contract and is outside of our ability to punish. He refused to appear here today, however, he has been informed that any future attempts to join the company will be weighed with his past actions in mind.

[...to Todd Michaelson...]

TM: Torin The Titan has returned home to France where he will be seeking some counseling with the aid of AWA management. He has expressed extreme remorse for his actions and this panel believes him. Therefore, he is released from his AWA contract per his request but is welcome to return in the future.

[...to Lori Dane...]

LD: My brother, Morgan, says he too was under the influence of the Eye of Tyr. However, due to Morgan's checkered history, the panel has ruled this testimony to be potentially false. Morgan has been released from his AWA contract and any future attempts to rejoin the company will require certain assurances moving forward.

[...to Karl O'Connor...]

KOC: Mr. Law, you came to the AWA pledging to be about justice... about law and order... and you fell in with a man who believed in none of those things? Why should this panel consider future employment with this company in the slightest?

[We cut to a shot of John Law standing in front of the judges. Law slowly removes his helmet, holding it in the crook of his right arm.]

JL: I was brought in to uphold the rules, the law of this company. Castillo was the one in charge of that very law, the only one that set the law in place. Being in opposition of that law... isn't that lawlessness personified?

[O'Connor shakes his head.]

KOC: When the law is wrong... when the authority is wrong... it is your duty to stand up and say so. All of us... it is our duty to stand and say so... and fight if needed. You fought on the other side of this, Mr. Law... the wrong side of this... and as such, you must be punished for it.

[Stegglet nods.]

JS: The panel is in agreement, Mr. Law. You are immediately released from your AWA contract and since your loyalty is to Korugun, I encourage you to seek your future employment with them.

[Law nods sternly, placing his helmet back on his head. He snaps off a salute to the tribunal...

...and we cut to a shot of Bobby Taylor being handed a sheet of paper.]

JS: What's that?

[Taylor looks it over with a smirk.]

BT: A letter from our ol' pal, John Wesley Hardin.

JS: How do you know?

[Taylor chuckles.]

BT: It's addressed to "that snot nosed ungrateful punk whose career I made."

JS: That would be you.

BT: It certainly would.

JS: What else does it say?

[Taylor clears his throat, reading aloud.]

BT: "To that snot nosed ungrateful punk whose career I made... tell your buddies that none of you have any damn power over me. Tell them that Korugun hired me and... yeah, as of last weekend, Korugun fired me... but that don't mean I work for any of you. I do whatever the hell I want because I'm the damned Outlaw... I'm still the damned Outlaw no matter how many times you try to trademark it, pretender. Now, tell your fellow suits I ain't got the time to come to Texas because I'm nose deep in some..."

[Taylor pauses.]

BT: ...yeah, I think that'll do. And he's right. We've got no power over him as long as he doesn't work for us... and I don't envision any scenario where he'll ever want to work for us.

[Taylor shrugs.]

BT: Next?

[We fade through to another shot of the "courtroom" where we find the towering masked form of Polemos... with a tie around his neck dangling off his bare chest. Standing next to him is the intergalactic phenom known as Omega.]

O: You can't do it! You just can't! He's innocent, I say... innocent! You can't send him to the Phantom Zone!

[Stegglet looks puzzled.]

JS: The... what?

O: Oh, I saw it on this old documentary called Superman II. When someone commits a crime in your world, you banish them to the Phantom Zone... and you can't send my Dear Deity away. He's reformed! He's a changed God of War!

[Stegglet sighs.]

JS: We actually just wanted to thank him for seeing the error of his ways and standing up for himself long before a lot of people did.

[Omega falls to his knees, bursting into tears.]

O: NOOOOOOOOOO! I LOVE HIM! WE'RE BESTIES! WE'RE-

[Polemos sighs, yanking Omega up by the collar. He gives a wave to the panel, walking out of the room with Omega still blubbering.]

JS: Have we discussed improving our mental health screening? Make a note to talk to Michelle about that, okay?

[Someone off-camera mutters an agreement as we fade to a very serious looking Jon Stegglet.]

JS: Jeff, we've known each other a long time.

[The camera pans to show Jeff Matthews listening intently.]

JS: I... while I'm disappointed that you decided to work for Korugun at all, I just don't...

[Stegglet trails off, shaking his head. He looks over to Todd who sighs.]

TM: Jeff, everywhere we've been in this business, you've been. From your days as the hot new free agent in Los Angeles to being right here for us when we ran the World Title tournament. There's a bond between you and... well, sorry Karl... at least four of us up here.

[Todd bites his bottom lip as Lori puts a hand on his shoulder.]

LD: We've all known you forever. We know your family, Debbie and the girls... and we just can't imagine that the AWA is better without you than it is with you, okay? So, in the spirit of old times, we're going to let you off with a warning... and hopefully 2018 can be a fresh start for all of us again.

[Matthews looks relieved as we fade to a shot of Derek Rage staring coldly at the panel.]

JS: Derek Rage, this isn't the first time we've had issues with you. And this time, you came back for a payday to try and put us down. You were a hired gun. A mercenary.

[Rage doesn't react to that description.]

TM: What worries me about you more than anything else is that your brother just came through huge for us... and put you through a table to do it... and if we turn the other cheek and let you stay, can you honestly tell me you're not going to take that chance to go after him again?

[A glimmer of a smile crosses Derek's face at the idea of it.]

TM: That's what I thought. Then Derek Rage... this panel rules that you are immediately released from your AWA contract and will not be considered for a potential new contract until no earlier than July 1st, 2018.

[We fade again, this time coming up on some shrieking sobs.]

"PLEEEEEEEEEASE! PLEEEEEEEEEASE DON'T FIRE ME!"

[We cut to Lori Dane sighing, shaking her head...

...and then pan over to show her daughter with streaks of makeup coming down her tear-covered face.]

MSH: I never was a part of Korugun! I was... we were, Kerry and I... we were undercover! I was feeling intel to... to... spies! And we were helping with a plan to bring it all down!

[Lori grimaces.]

LD: Sandra, we have you on camera multiple times kissing up to Javier Castillo. And you were... a spy? A spy for who? We have spoken to all the members of Team AWA, discussed these cases with them for their input, and at no point did anyone say you were feeding them information.

[Sandra sputters, grimacing...]

MSH: It was... in code! Maybe they didn't have... I don't...

[She starts violently sobbing again.]

MSH: I worked so hard to get back!

[Lori slams a hand down on the table.]

LD: You had me call Jon to get your job back!

[Stegglet smirks, waving at Sandra... who sobs again.]

LD: Stop. Please... Sandra, please stop crying.

[Sandra bites her bottom lip, looking up at her mother.]

LD: Now... look... you were friends with the man. That's no crime.

[Todd mutters "it oughta be" under his breath and earns an elbow in the ribs.]

LD: We have no evidence of you actively trying to help Korugun put the AWA down, okay?

[Sandra nods, her teary eyes sparkling.]

LD: And... well, someone on this panel was a character witness for you.

[Todd shakes his head at his wife.]

LD: So, we're going to let you go with a warning, okay? Just...

[She looks at Todd, kind of at a loss for words.]

LD: ...don't let it happen again, missy!

[She shrugs at Todd who looks puzzled as Sandra squeals with delight.]

MSH: Thankyouthankyouthankyouuuuuuuuuuu!

[Hayes goes running from the room before anyone can change their mind.]

LD: Being a parent is tough.

[And we fade to Jay Alana standing in an open Hawaiian shirt, his well-toned physique on display.]

JS: Your case is one of the hardest today, Mr. Alana. On one hand, we've all heard the hype that you're the hottest free agent in wrestling... and now you work for us. The Internet exploded at your debut and we truly believe you have a bright future here in the AWA...

[Alana tugs his sunglasses into place... get it, bright future?]

JS: ...but on the other, you came here with the express intent to put the people on this panel out of this company and put Korugun on top.

[Stegglet pauses.]

JS: I had AWA Legal pull your deal to take a look at it... and we found something interesting. You actually signed TWO contracts.

[Alana raises an eyebrow.]

JS: As it turns out, Castillo had you sign a two week contract for the period around WarGames... AND a long-term deal that is set to begin upon execution of the signed agreement. I suppose this was his insurance policy to make sure you towed the line for him inside of WarGames.

[Stegglet smiles.]

JS: Luckily, his treachery works out for us in this case. Because with this deal in my hand, I have absolutely no worries about telling you that this contract will begin... let's say July 1st. And at that time, we'll be more than happy to promote you to the moon and back. But until then...?

[Alana pulls down his shades, glaring at Stegglet for a moment...

...and then sighs with a shrug.]

JA: Six month vacation? Cool.

[He tugs his glasses back into place, turning to leave as a surprised Stegglet looks at Michaelson.]

JS: He took that well.

TM: Better than his old man will.

[Stegglet grimaces, nodding as we fade to a shot of Ebola Zaire on a video monitor.]

JS: I understand you're still injured?

[Zaire responds by reaching off camera, pulling a light bulb into view.]

JS: Mr. Zaire? You're still injured?

[And with a manic glee in his eyes, he SMASHES the light bulb on his forehead, digging shards of broken glass into his badly-scarred flesh that starts bleeding. Stegglet grimaces.]

JS: Riiiiiiight. Anyone else want to take this?

[Karl O'Connor leans forward, the grizzled legend that he is.]

KOC: With pleasure. You're a disgrace to the sport that I dedicated so much of my life to. You're fired, sir. Cut the damn feed.

[The TV cuts out as O'Connor shakes his head, sitting back in his chair...

...and we fade again to find Jackson Hunter standing in front of the panel, already speaking...]

JH: I HATE Javier Castillo. HATE him! I bet I hate him more than you all do!

[Stegglet raises an eyebrow.]

JH: Okay, okay... maybe not. But still.... I HATE him! Anything I did with... for.. no, no... adjacent to him... it was all an act. It was all for my own benefit and not his. Was I in the Tower of Doom? Nooooooooo! Was I in WarGames? Nooooooooo! I never did anything but-

[Taylor interrupts.]

BT: But get Jordan Ohara out of consideration for WarGames?

[Hunter pauses, snapping a finger, pointing at Taylor.]

JH: Yes. That.

[Stegglet sighs.]

JS: As much as I'd love to send you packing to that ranch of yours, the panel finds that you truly did very little to help Javier Castillo and Korugun. And seeing as though your... Death Star... has left you hanging, we feel you've been punished enough.

[Hunter looks relieved but mutters... "Blake?"]

JS: Hmm? Yes. He informed us that he's opting out of his AWA contract renewal and will be touring with Total Japan Pro Wrestling. In return, we informed our friend GOLIATH to welcome him as... harshly... as possible.

[Stegglet smiles.]

JS: Dismissed.

[Hunter stumbles out of the room, weakly muttering "Blaaaaaake" again...

...and we cut to a steel-eyed Kurayami who is appearing by video.]

JS: Kurayami, while you remained in the employ of Korugun for the entire year, we find that you actually did very little to help their cause.

[Kurayami snarls.]

K: Castillo was a bug. But a useful one at times.

[She shrugs.]

JS: In consideration of your case, we've been informed you will not be renewing your deal.

K: At this time, no.

JS: Can I ask why? As a former World Champion, you would certainly be up for a big raise, a title rematch, a-

[Kurayami shakes her head.]

K: Not yet. I will come back. And I will get my money and my title. But on my terms, not yours. I've got business to take care of here in Japan first.

But you tell the Spitfire that I said "congratulations..."

[She smiles a wicked grin.]

K: ...and I'll see her soon.

[The TV shuts off as we cut to all three members of the Dogs of War staring up at the panel defiantly.]

JS: What in the world am I supposed to do with the three of you? You've been a part of this company for years now... and yet it seems you've spent a big chunk of that time trying to rip us down.

[No response from the trio.]

JS: You took the Wise Men's money. You took Korugun's money. And yet you still want to be in a spot to take our money... is that right?

[Still nothing. Perez sneers up at Stegglet.]

JS: Defiant til the end, huh? Todd, what do you think?

[Michaelson shakes his head.]

TM: I mean... we kept them employed after they worked for Childes... part of me thinks we kinda know what we have here and we'd be dumb to act like we don't, you know?

[Stegglet nods.]

TM: But... what exactly did that get you besides a few extra dollars in your pocket? You were a bunch of hired thugs who Castillo used as muscle. He didn't care if you won or lost until it mattered to his endgame.

When you lost to the James Gang at SuperClash before, it was front page news... you lose to KAMS this year and... now what?

[Todd shakes his head.]

TM: When you came into this place, you were dominant... you were on top of the world... you looked unbeatable. And all these years later and... just look at you... do I have to say it again? You lost to KAMS at SuperClash and you stand in front of us looking all bad and tough but... the Dogs of War I know would've put AJ Martinez' million dollar face through a windshield for even THINKING about beating them. Let's face it, guys...

[He pauses.]

TM: You seem broken to me. At this point, I'd vote to let you go not because of what you did this year... but because of what you HAVEN'T done since you lost to the James Gang.

[Perez starts to step forward but Carpenter grabs him HARD on the wrist, causing the Puerto Rican to seethe in place. Todd glares at him, almost inviting him to say something...

...and then with a dismissive wave, he turns back to Jon Stegglet.]

JS: Alright, guys... like Todd says, you're the devils we know and we shouldn't be surprised that you'll do anything for an extra payday. So, we're going to let you stay.

But I'm also aware that your contracts are coming up at Memorial Day Mayhem. That means you have until then to convince us that the Dogs of War are still the same tough sons of bitches they were when they got here. Understood?

[Carpenter nods for his team as we fade to the duo of James Lynch and his spiritual advisor, Bobby O'Connor.]

JS: Gentlemen... your cases are quite different, but I'm told that, Mr. O'Connor, you requested to be seen together.

[Bobby nods.]

BOC: Everything I've done that's brought me here in front of you, everything we've accomplished... it was for the same common goal. It felt only right.

JS: I see. Well, Mr. Lynch...

[Stegglet grimaces.]

JS: I hope you're proud of yourself after hearing Gordon Myers last week. I hope you're proud of crushing your parents. I hope you're proud of-

[Taylor clears his throat.]

BT: Jon, I think we're off the path, partner.

[Stegglet nods, waving a hand at Taylor.]

BT: You two did some pretty bad stuff over the past few months... especially last week in Atlanta. But...

[Taylor shrugs.]

BT: I'm not sure how much of it really helped Korugun. Yeah, Jack got taken out of WarGames but... we still won. Yeah, you ran around in facepai-

[Taylor pauses, tapping his temple.]

BT: Ah... yeah. That's right. You...

[He points at James.]

BT: ...you piece of sh-

[Lori urgently clears her throat.]

BT: -trash... you helped put my son in the hospital. You delivered the final blow that put him on the shelf for MONTHS and threatened his career. That's what you did for Castillo! That's what you did for Korugun! And I oughta shove my hand down

your throat, rip out your black heart, and feed it to your damn "spiritual advisor" if that's what he told you to do.

[O'Connor shakes his head.]

BOC: There hasn't been a single thing I've done, that was done for Korugun. I serve a much higher purpose than some board of directors. Everything I've done, I've done for the family of this sport. Since I was a kid, I was told that if I grew to be a friend of the Lynches that I'd be doing something right.

[O'Connor smiles.]

BOC: So, I did something better than being their friend.

[Bobby looks upwards, clasping his hands together over his heart.]

BOC: I saved them.

[James Lynch looks at the tribunal with an eerie calm.]

JL: Please, Mr. Taylor, show me the footage of you saying such things to the Beale Street Bullies? Please, Mr. Taylor, show me the kangaroo court you put Sunshine in front of?

Please, Mr. Taylor, show me some evidence that the only reason you care about what I did was because it happened to you and your family.

Until then, I am uninterested in answering for actions that, in any other context, carried out by any other wrestler would not raise a single one of your eyebrows.

[Taylor grimaces... and then nods.]

BT: I have a personal issue with the two of you. Jon too. But that's on us. Not you... not here.

[Karl O'Connor speaks up.]

KOC: I'm... I'm as ashamed as I could ever possibly be of you, Bobby.

[Bobby shakes his head.]

BOC: You just don't understand, Grandpa Karl. It's too big for you to see the entire scope of it. But when the final brushstroke lands, you'll see why I needed to do it.

[Karl sighs heavily, pain evident on his face.]

KOC: I don't know what path you walked down to get here... it's certainly not one that your father or I showed you. And you, Jimmy... your father... your mother... you're breaking their hearts! And you don't seem to care!

If it was up to me, I'd send you both out of town on a rail until you figured out who you really are.

[Bobby shakes his head.]

BOC: That's the thing. Everything I've done, it's only been because of how you all raised me. The lessons you told me about the importance of family. The importance of morals. I'm just taking all of that, every single lesson...

[Bobby opens his palms, lifting them up.]

BOC: ... and giving it as a gift to the world.

[Karl sighs again, looking to Stegglet.]

JS: Bobby O'Connor, the panel has determined that your actions... while certainly dishonorable... were not directly to benefit Korugun and therefore you will receive no punishment other than to say...

[Stegglet holds up a sheet of paper.]

JS: ...it appears as though James Lynch has requested that your managerial license of him be revoked effective immediately.

[O'Connor throws a shocked look at James who looks away from him. But even as O'Connor looks away, Lynch turns in his direction.]

JL: I want to be clear. You will always be my friend, Bobby. But... I know you still want to destroy my broth... I know you still want to see him destroyed.

But I am done with him. The war is over, and I've won.

And unless the hangman's noose is about to fall in the next few minutes... I have other things I wish to pursue.

[O'Connor looks thoughtfully at James... and then nods.]

BOC: If that's how you want it, if that's what you really--

[Bobby silences himself for a moment, turning his look of surprise into one of serenity.]

BOC: I forgive you.

[Stegglet smirks.]

JS: It seems like you two have a lot to talk about. James Lynch...

[He pauses, perhaps reconsidering his next words.]

JS: Because of the love and admiration I have for your father... for your mother... for Theresa and Jack and Travis and... your entire family... and for all they've done for the AWA and all they've meant to the AWA...

...even you...

...the panel has decided you will not be punished for your actions on behalf of Korugun.

[James turns to look at Stegglet and nods.]

JL: I would thank you, but you did nothing more than what you were supposed to do. So... I will accept that you chose to do the right thing.

[Stegglet looks on with disappointment.]

JS: For the love of God... please take this second chance and do something with it. Lord knows the two of you have done enough damage.

[There is a slight smirk and a subtle chuckle from Lynch.]

JL: "Enough"... well, that remains to be seen.

[Stegglet looks disgusted as we fade to Truth Marie Temple and Veronica Westerly standing side by side before the panel.]

JS: First thing's first... Truth Marie, don't worry one bit. You're fine. In fact, we just wanted you here so we could thank you for your bravery and guts and... whatever other words you want to use to describe it. You're an amazing young woman with a bright future ahead of you in whatever you decide to do in life.

[Truth Marie beams at the compliment, quietly saying "thank you."]

JS: Veronica...

[Stegglet pauses, a stern expression on his face... and then suddenly starts laughing.]

JS: ...we should punish you, right? You were Castillo's right hand woman for most of the year. You made people's lives Hell but...

[He throws his hands up.]

JS: ...you threw fire in the son of a bitch's face and made him fall through a table! It was great! I cried tears of joy when I saw it happen!

[Veronica smiles.]

JS: And so... no punishment for you either, Veronica. You are free to pursue a career here in the AWA on or off camera... or we wish you well in whatever else you might choose to do with your life.

[Stegglet grins, slapping a hand on the table.]

JS: Go! Be with your family.

[Todd speaks up.]

TM: Give Caleb my best.

[Veronica pauses, almost stumbling as she looks back with a nod before exiting with her daughter in a walking embrace...]

...and we fade to the middle of a scene, loud shouting of... noises... weird skin meeting skin sounds... what in the world...?

Oh, it's Muteesa.]

KOC: I'm sorry. Does he understand what we're...?

JS: He understands just fine, Karl... I think. Now... I don't think he speaks-

[The door swings open again and in marches "Doctor" Harrison Fawcett. He looks refreshed - a clean suit, a smile on his face, his facial clothing impeccably in place. A far cry from the man we saw last week.]

"D"HF: Perhaps I can be of assistance?

[Stegglet smiles.]

JS: Perhaps you can. Can you let Muteesa know that he's being released from his contract and that if he wants to come back six months or so in the future, we'll re-evaluate his case?

[Fawcett nods, placing a hand on Muteesa's shoulder which somehow seems to calm him. Fawcett speaks softly to the big man who nods a few times before lumbering away, slapping his painted belly as Fawcett smiles after him.]

"D"HF: He understands.

[Stegglet nods.]

JS: Good. He might be the only one though, Mr. Fawc-

[Fawcett speaks up.]

"D"HF: Doctor, if you please.

[Stegglet grimaces a bit.]

JS: "Doctor," of course. I have to say there's a lot I don't understand about what happened out there with the Eye of Tyr. Care to explain?

[Fawcett pauses, shaking his head slightly.]

"D"HF: I'm afraid, dear man, that some things are mysteries better left unexplored. Suffice to say that the crisis has passed and that particular instrument will no longer be of concern to the AWA.

JS: Uh huh. And I suppose we have you to thank for that?

[Fawcett shrugs.]

"D"HF: In my estimation, Mr. Stegglet, you have me to thank for a great many things. It was I, after all, who came back to the AWA with my tail between my legs... for show of course... to lure Javier Castillo into giving me his trust. It was I, after all, who forged his reliance on a weapon he could not control. It was I, after all, who allowed young Miss Temple to discover the location of KING Oni.

[Stegglet's jaw drops. Fawcett chuckles.]

"D"HF: Oh, come now, Mr. Stegglet. Did you truly believe anyone but me would have that knowledge? And did you truly believe that a child would come by it so easily if I hadn't placed it within her grasp?

Tsk tsk.

You underestimate me, Mr. Stegglet.

And in your greatest moment of peril, Mr. Stegglet... it was I who sacrificed my greatest treasure to free the minds of the Titan and ultimately Mr. Vasquez.

Your victory, Mr. Stegglet...

[He opens his hands, showing his palms.]

"D"HF: ...was delivered from my hands.

[Stegglet looks at Fawcett for a few quiet moments before finally nodding.]

JS: Nice speech. We'd already decided to let you slide.

[Fawcett smiles.]

"D"HF: The least that you could do, I'm sure.

[Stegglet nods.]

JS: Dismissed.

[But Fawcett doesn't budge, staying with his hands open.]

JS: Was there something else, Doctor?

[He spews "doctor" at Fawcett's feet like something distasteful but Fawcett does not take the bait.]

"D"HF: Gratitude, perhaps, Mr. Stegglet. I have given you a list of a few - not all-encompassing - reasons why your triumph comes thanks to me and your gratitude is expressed by not... showing me the door so to speak?

[Stegglet looks annoyed now.]

JS: You want more?

[Fawcett clasps the open hands to his chest.]

"D"HF: Only what I deserve.

[Stegglet grimaces.]

JS: And what's that?

[Fawcett chuckles softly... and darkly...]

"D"HF: Oh, my dear man... I'm sure we can come to some sort of agreement. In due time.

[He gives a mock salute before turning and making his exit.]

JS: I don't trust that man.

TM: Who does?

[And we fade to the anguished face of Juan Vasquez. He stands facing the panel, his hands clasped behind his back as if handcuffed. His face is unshaven, his hair unwashed for at least a few days. His clothing is rumpled and barely presentable. His head is bowed, looking down at the floor. This is a man in penance.]

JS: Juan Vasquez.

[No response.]

JS: Juan... please... look at me.

[Vasquez slowly raises his head, his eyes struggling to meet his old friend's.]

JS: Thank you. I...

[Stegglet pauses, shaking his head.]

JS: I thought I'd know what to say in this moment but I don't... I really don't. You're telling stories about the Eye of Tyr. Michelle's backing you up on that. Ryan too. I don't know what to believe about it but I trust them and... well, I used to trust you... with everything.

[Stegglet is obviously going through some emotions too as he clears his throat.]

JS: Juan Vasquez, you have been accused of conspiring with the Korugun Corporation for TWO years in bringing about the downfall of the people who stand in judgment before you... of bringing others under your influence for the same purpose... of attacking fellow wrestlers with the purpose of inflicting permanent injury... of...

[Stegglet pauses, putting the paper down.]

JS: ...but you know all this.

Juan, in this moment, I need to know... looking into your eyes... do you truly believe this was all caused by that crystal?

[Vasquez grimaces, shaking his head.]

JV: I don't know what to believe either, Jon.

If you'd asked me the night before Thanksgiving, I could've given you every reason why I was doing the things I was doing. But suddenly that night... in the cage... not a single one of them made sense anymore.

[He shrugs.]

JV: I'm not sure if that makes me a believer or a liar... but I know that I did what I did and...

[The man the AWA was once built upon shrugs.]

JV: ...I'm not sure anything excuses that.

[Stegglet slowly nods, trying to understand.]

JS: I see. Juan... you know we're in an incredibly tough spot. Outside of Castillo, you're the one who caused the most harm to this company in the name of Korugun. But at the same time, if you hadn't come around at the end of WarGames, none of us might be here today.

[He pauses again.]

JS: There are rumors that you're considering retirement. Can you tell me if that's true?

[Vasquez again hesitates before answering.]

JV: Yes.

[Stegglet nods.]

JS: And have you made a decision?

[Vasquez again is very slow to respond, the words being pulled from him. It comes out in a croak, his voice filled with pain... with regret... with acceptance.]

JV: Yes.

[Stegglet pauses, looking first to his left at Michaelson and Dane... then to his right at O'Connor and Taylor... and with a nod, he speaks.]

JS: I understand. Then... out of gratitude... out of respect... out of friendship...

I would like you come to Super Saturday and tell the world your decision.

[Vasquez locks eyes with Stegglet, nodding slowly.]

JV: I'll be there.

[And we fade one more time to a now-empty room. The judges look emotionally drained, now standing in a loose circle in front of their table.]

JS: Well, that could've gone worse.

TM: I suppose.

JS: Oh, come on... at least Castillo didn't show up.

BT: Heh... I was hoping he would. I was looking forward to kicking his ass out the door.

[Laughter all around when the door pushes open.]

JS: Hey Mark... care to join us?

[Mark Stegglet edges his way into the room, an envelope in his hand.]

MS: I... well, Uncle Jon... you need to see this.

[Jon Stegglet furrows his brow, taking the envelope from his nephew. He pulls a sheet of paper.]

BT: What is it?

[Stegglet sighs, shaking his head.]

JS: It's a letter from Castillo's lawyer.

[Lori chuckles.]

LD: What? Is he suing us?

[Stegglet shakes his head.]

JS: Worse. It's to inform us that at midnight on Thanksgiving Day, Castillo filed three documents under seal with his attorney. His lawyer calls it an "insurance policy." This letter says the documents were read and notarized before seal and are legally binding in regards to their content.

TM: What the hell does all that mean?

JS: It means Castillo dropped a bomb on us just in case he lost. Three documents that could say... who the hell knows what... and now this lawyer...

[He shakes the letter.]

JS: ...can spring them on us whenever Castillo wants him to.

TM: Well...

[Michaelson shrugs.]

TM: ...that doesn't sound at all like something that could end up being awful for us.

[Stegglet grins at his best friend.]

JS: Right. Well, I-

[Mark Stegglet puts a hand on his uncle's shoulder.]

MS: There's more.

[Jon Stegglet sighs.]

JS: Seriously? What more could there possibly be?

[Mark grimaces, pulling an iPad into view.]

MS: About ten minutes ago, this video got posted online. It's... pretty much everywhere now. It went viral in minutes and... well, you should just watch.

[Mark connects the iPad to the monitor in the room wirelessly, pressing "Play" for all to see...

...and the video starts with what appears to be a handheld cell phone shot of the exterior of a hospital. There is an ambulance waiting with its doors open, a pair of uniformed medics standing nearby making small talk. The cameraman is presumably out of sight as no one seems to be looking towards the camera's shot.

A few moments pass before the doors to the hospital swing open, a rolling hospital bed being pushed towards the ambulance. The camera shot zooms in, jumpy and losing quality a little to reveal a familiar dark-haired gentleman on board. His face is partially bandaged, inflamed red skin sticking out from the area that's not. Some of his hair has been shaved away with more bandages are wrapped. He is broken. He is a shell of his former self. He is Javier Castillo and he is being loaded into this ambulance in a totally unconscious state.

As the ambulance doors slam, the camera shot shifts to the ground...

...and we cut to show a similar shot, this time in a car that appears to be following the same ambulance. The twilight sky has darkened, headlights on the road as the ambulance pulls off the street, quickly backing into an alley. The cameraman's car halts as well, the shot now peering down the alley where a large truck is waiting. The cameraman gets out of the car, leaving it on the side of the road as he approaches the spot where the ambulance has backed close to the truck. Several others are standing around as the ambulance doors swing open and someone mutters "make it quick."

The stretcher is lifted from the ambulance and quickly moved into the truck. Some of the others disappear into the truck as well as the ambulance closes up and pulls away. Moments later, the truck's doors are slammed shut and someone slaps a hand on the side of the truck, causing it to pull the opposite way out of the alley. One of the others pulls a cell phone out, tapping at it before holding it to their head.

"We have the package."

And hangs up immediately. With a nod and a quick handshake, the caller walks back towards the car waiting outside the alley as the camera shot cuts out to black...

...and stays on black for a few moments... but with different noises, sounds that seem to be coming from inside a moving vehicle. A groan is heard, soft at first... but the second one is louder. The person is in great pain and discomfort...

...the sound of jingling metal... a chain maybe...]

"Whaaaazis?"

[The voice sounds weary... weak... maybe drug-tinged.]

"Whazzzgon?"

[The slurring makes it hard to figure out what's being said. The rattling chain gets louder.]

"Whazz... what is this?"

[The voice is clearer this time, easy to understand as the jingling sound gets louder and more frantic.]

"Am I... chained?!"

[More rattling. The person lets loose a shout this time.]

"Hello?! Is anyone there?!"

[The voice echoes with no answer.]

"Is... damn it, do you even know who the hell I am?! I have powerful allies! I am powerful! You... you're going to regret this!"

[The road noise shifts as the sounds of vehicle shocks are heard, squeaking in time. A cough rings out.]

"Is someone there?!"

[And with another shift in road noise, a small light kicks on, flickering as it does. We can see a frantic Javier Castillo, chained to the wall of this truck, pulling nervously at the chains holding him.]

"This... this isn't right. You can't do this to me."

[With the added light, we can see the truck shift violently as it hits a bump or something on the road, causing Castillo's hospital bed to bounce and twist in place. He looks... scared.]

"You... you can't do this..."

[Another bump kicks on a second light, revealing a second person chained in the same location, being held standing against the wall of the truck. A person that a sharp-eyed longtime AWA viewer just might remember - young Dylan Harvey whose head lolls to the side, almost out of his own control as he looks over at Castillo.]

"You get used to it."

[Cut to black.]